



S.I.S. NEWSLETTER

A Publication of The Society for Iranian Studies

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1984 MESA/SIS Meeting

This year's annual MESA/SIS meeting will be hosted by the University of California, Berkeley at the Sheraton-Palace Hotel in San Francisco from Wednesday, November 28 through Sunday, December 1.

The Council of the Society will meet from 12:00-3:00 on Wednesday, November 28. The Business meeting, to which all Society members are invited to attend, will also be held on Wednesday from 4:00 to 6:00. Nominations for 3 new Council members will be taken at this meeting. Said Amir Arjomand, Habib Ladjevardi, and Marilyn Waldman will complete their three-year terms at the end of 1984. If you are unable to attend this meeting and wish to nominate someone, please send your suggestions in writing to the Executive Secretary no later than October 31, 1984.

Additional MESA Meeting Information

Sheraton-Palace Hotel in downtown San Francisco (639 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94105; 415-392-8600): single rooms begin at \$63, double & twins begin at \$71. It is advisable to reserve early at the Sheraton-Palace to get the best rates.

Airfare: Mcgettigan's Corporate Planning Services (1609 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103; 800-523-4614) is arranging special airfares -- below supersaver rates.

As in the past, SIS will have a table in the Exhibit Room. Any member wishing to take care of matters pertaining to membership, back issues, subscription problems, etc. are invited to drop by. We will be trying to sign up new members and encourage current members to help us in this effort by introducing prospective candidates.

Call for 1985 Papers

In order to provide greater opportunity for all SIS members (specially those who are unable to attend the November 1984 Annual Meeting) to organize panels or present papers at the 1985 Annual meeting, we plan to experiment with the following procedure:

1. As of this date we are asking all members who would like to organize a panel or present a paper at the 1985 meeting to send a one-page description of their proposed panel or paper to the Executive Secretary before November 1, 1984.
2. Proposals received for 1985 will be presented at the Annual Business Meeting in San Francisco which will be held on November 28, 1984, 4:00 to 6:00 pm. At this meeting members present will have an opportunity, as in the past, to offer additional suggestions for panels. At the end of the meeting the members' sentiments toward the various proposals will be gauged through an informal vote.
3. The Executive Council, taking the above into account, will appoint chairpersons, finalize topics and work out the various arrangements in conjunction with the MESA organizing committee for the 1985 panels.

IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS NEW PROCEDURE WORK, WE NEED ALL OF YOU WHO WOULD LIKE TO ORGANIZE A PANEL OR PRESENT A PAPER AT THE 1985 MEETING TO SEND A ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL TO THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 1984.

San Francisco Panels

Prof. John Smith of Berkeley is responsible for organizing this year's panels. Three panels will be presented:

I. SOCIOLOGY OF THE IRANIAN WRITER
Friday, November 30 8:30 - noon

Chairperson: Michael C. Hillmann, University of Texas at Austin

Papers: Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak

"The Writers' Association of Iran, 1977-1981: Protest and Perish"
Farzaneh Milani

"Power, Prudence, and Print: Censorship and Simin Daneshvar"
Mohammad R. Ghanoonparvar, University of Virginia

"Hushang Golshiri and New Concerns of the Iranian Writer of Fiction"
Leonardo P. Alishan, University of Utah

"Ahmad Shamlu: The Rebel Poet in Search of an Audience"
Carter Bryant

"Reza Baraheni: The Revolution and Beyond"

Michael C. Hillmann, University of Texas

"Nader Naderpur and Thirty Years of Persian Poetry"

Discussant: Michael Beard, University of North Dakota

II. WOMEN IN IRAN

Thursday, November 29 10:30 - noon

Chairperson: Eliz Sanasarian, University of Southern California

Papers: Margot Badran, Hamilton College

Eliz Sanasarian, University of Southern California

"Feminist Goals in Iran and Egypt in the 1920s and 1930s"

Rokhsareh Shoaee, University of California, Los Angeles

"The Mojahed Women: The Emergence of the Revolutionary Moslem Women in Iran"

Erika Friedl, Western Michigan University

"Women and the Ethics of Work"

Homa Mahmoudi

Hoda Mahmoudi, Westminster College

"Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Iranian Women in the United States"

III. PROBLEMS OF BIOGRAPHY IN IRANIAN HISTORY

Saturday, December 1 10:30 - noon

Chairperson: Marvin Zonis, University of Chicago

(No other information available at time of printing.)

Abstracts

I. SOCIOLOGY OF THE IRANIAN WRITER

Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "The Writers' Association of Iran, 1977-1981: Protest and Perish"

The Writers' Association of Iran was the most important such association in the history of Persian literature. It came into existence in 1968 as a vehicle by means of which non-establishment, engage writers attempted to influence the Pahlavi monarchy to reduce the censorship of written material. After the sudden death of Jalal Al-e Ahmad, a driving force in the organization, in September 1969, the organization did little until the late 1970s.

In 1977, the second phase of the Writers' Association of Iran began its most notable organizational activity, being the famous Ten Nights gatherings that fall which it sponsored. This paper reviews the organization's history during its second phase from 1977 to 1981.

Farzaneh Milani, "Power, Prudence, and Print: Censorship and Simin Daneshvar"

In a recent interview, Daneshvar recognized the possibility of evading censors in delightfully subversive ways. A few months later, however, her latest novel, The Wandering Island, was denied publication permit. As a woman who necessarily expects, accepts and rejects censorship in a different quantity and quality than men, and as a writer unattached to any political group or party, Daneshvar, in her pre-revolutionary writing, has managed to partly circumvent two sharply opposing yet

curiously similar forms of censorship: governmental and anti-governmental (if in the opinion of the regime art had to serve the state, according to the oppositional intellectuals it had to serve the masses). The Islamic Republic, however, by claiming to have joined the welfare of the masses with that of the state has reached a fearful pinnacle of censorship, delimiting literary operation in religio-politically defined boundaries. Deriding this most insidious form of censorship now calls for yet more ingeniously subversive ways.

It should also be recognized that Daneshvar's whole canon of work (both pre- and post-revolutionary) draws on many modes of censorship and alludes -- wittingly or not -- to the tension this creates on all facets of life especially man-woman relationship. For censorship is blind to boundaries. With a limitless mobility, it defies any limit and overextends itself in all directions -- internal and external. It obstinately demands new realms, covers new grounds, and like mushrooms after the rain, springs up in unpredictable spots. Small wonder, then, if Daneshvar's fictive world is crowded by loneliness however much not built on aloneness. Hers is a world in which most characters -- be they male or female -- lose spontaneity, eliminate adventures, cage the unexpected, and trap variety. Seldom the unaffected, unadulterated experience is allowed to rush in and rarely the spontaneous, uncensored emotions are permitted to rush out. Ever so precarious and brittle, it seems as if these relationships perpetually rehearse their ultimate defeat.

Leonardo P. Alishan, "Ahmad Shamlu: The Rebel Poet in Search of an Audience"

Through his journalistic endeavors from his late teens until the early 1980's, and in all twelve of his collections of poems following Forgotten Songs (1947) along with three selections of his poetry and a collection of his essays, Ahmad Shamlu (b.1925) has been a socially committed, engage writer praised by critics such as Reza Baraheni as "the true representative" of modern Persian poetry whose poems constitute not only his own autobiography, but the "biography of our <the Iranian> society." This presentation attempts to demonstrate why the works of the most popular engage poet of Iran, in an impressive span of thirty years, have failed to impress the masses. Bearing in mind that Shamlu had not nursed an illusion of the "proletariat" but had shown an awareness of the problem from as early on as the early '60s, the basic impotence of Persian poetry to change Iranian society becomes even more painfully evident. The poet's consistent attempts at "awakening" the lethargic masses will be discussed along with his periodic bursts of frustration and anger which, following the Islamic revolution, culminate in his sober observations on the nature of committed art, the ideal government for the artist, and his future responsibilities to his own art and society.

Ultimately it will be demonstrated that Shamlu and all the other engage poets who espoused some semblance of Marxist ideology were alienated from the people by the very nature of their own "Western," post-Hegelian concept of time, evolution and progress, whereas the "masses" had remained faithful to their religious, mono-cyclical concept of time and messianic salvation. In short, the verity of Shamlu's bitter confession to the effect that "where my poetry was supposed to impress and influence...it didn't have a single audience," will be discussed along with the advice of the Cultural Consultant of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran who, in response to a poet discontent with the government's lack of attention to his works, said: "Research and try to understand why the prayer ceremonies for the martyrs on cold winter nights are performed with more warmth and enthusiasm than are all the poetry readings of all the poets put together."

Mohammad R. Ghanoonparvar, "Hushang Golshiri and New Concerns of the Iranian Writer of Fiction"

Hushang Golshiri (b.1937) is perhaps the best-known among the active writers of fiction in Iran. His reputation rests, for the most part, on his masterful novel Shazdeh Ehtejab (1969) and two important collections of short sotries, Mesl-e Hamisheh (1968-69) and Namazkhaneh-ye Kuchek-e (1975-76). His stance as a "committed," anti-establishment literary artist in the last two decades of the Pahlavi regime brought upon him official censorship and incarceration.

Like many other modernist writers in pre-Khomeyni Iran, Golshiri viewed literature as a vehicle for socio-political protest. However, within six months after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, Golshiri had apparently changed his views, asserting that political issues were an extra burden on literature, opposing the "game of commitment" and the "literature of struggle" as anachronistic in post-Pahlavi Iran, and stating that literature can no longer pretend to address all the people, but must address particular strata of society. Although Golshiri's pre-Khomeyni fiction consists mainly of rather enigmatic stories saturated with often difficult and not readily decipherable symbolism, he foresees for the future a literature of clarity and directness, devoid of engimatic symbolism. Nevertheless, the imposition of strict censorship by the Islamic Republic of Iran would suggest that Golshiri and other Iranian writers still living in the country may be obliged to resort once again to a literature both committed in nature, albeit with inevitably different concerns, and enigmatic in form. Golshiri's most recent works can be seen as indicative of the new directions in post-Pahlavi Persian literature.

Carter Bryant, "Reza Baraheni: The Revolution and Beyond"

Reza Baraheni, the outspoken Iranian (actually Azarbaijani Turkish born) poet and author, was well known to the American public who followed Iranian affairs during the seventies. Imprisoned under the Shah's government after his first visit to the U.S. in 1972, Reza was freed partly due to the clamor raised by American intellectuals on his behalf in the pages of the New York Times. Invited to the University of Iowa's writing program in 1974, Baraheni returned to the United States; he taught in Indiana and Maryland and assumed leadership of the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran. He published articles denouncing the government of the Shah in many journals, associated himself with PEN and Amnesty International, went on speaking tours with such notables as Kate Millett and Daniel Ellsberg and published a volume of poetry and a volume of essays in English. One of the essays recounted his experiences in the Shah's prisons.

The presentation will give a brief overview of Baraheni's fiction and non-fiction (in recent years he has all but abandoned poetry) from the immediately pre-revolutionary period through his most recent publications. Baraheni has also been imprisoned under the Khomeini regime, and it is the feeling that his three most recent publications (dealing with excesses of past regimes, particularly in regard to the citizens of Azarbaijan) may not do him any good in spite of the fact that he was released from Khomeini's prison due to the intervention of Amnesty International. Also, there will be a brief discussion of Baraheni's first novel to be available in English, my own translation of Ayaz. This novel stands as Baraheni's broadest political statement to date, meaning that rather than a study of historical instances of oppression in Iran, it is a vast tapestry, a pageant, an hallucination, an epic study which reveals as much about the author's own unconscious as it does about the collective unconscious of his nation. It is a novel about Iran under all her despots through her entire history, thus it is as much about Iran today as about Iran ten or a thousand years ago. Ayaz is to Iran as Joyce's Ulysses was and is to Ireland.

Michael C. Hillmann, "Nader Naderpur and Thirty Years of Persian Poetry"

Nader Naderpur (b.1929) has been one of Iran's most popular poets since the mid-1950s. Critical scrutiny of his career may prove particularly illuminating in the appreciation of the issues and achievements of contemporary Persian poetry for two reasons besides continuing popularity. First is the fact that Naderpur had been uniquely controversial among prominent contemporary Iranian poets in critical questioning of his poetic accomplishments in terms of issues of traditionalism versus modernism in Persian poetry, of social engagement in art versus aesthetic aims, and of notions about the appropriate roles of the literary artist in Pahlavi and Khomeyni Iran. Second is the fact that Naderpur has continued to produce poetry, in Tehran through mid-1980 and in exile in Paris since then.

This paper reviews Naderpur's life and career with a focus on its controversial aspects for the purpose of a partial characterization of the sociology of the contemporary Iranian poet.

II. WOMEN IN IRAN

Margot Badran and Eliz Sanasarian, "Feminist Goals in Iran and Egypt in the 1920s and 1930s"

The women's rights movements in Iran and Egypt in the first quarter of the twentieth century were the first collective attempts to enhance the condition of women. This study explores the similarities and differences in the goals of the two movements in light of the socio-political developments in both countries. Both movements were led by middle- to upper-class women. Wider educational opportunities for women, changes in family laws, and health and hygiene of mothers and children were emphasized in both countries.

Despite these apparent similarities, there were profound differences between the two movements. These differences stemmed from the internal structure of these movements as well as the socio-political environment of both countries at that time. For instance, while Egyptian feminists blatantly attacked polygamy and later on in the 1930s fought for women's right to work outside the home, the Iranian feminists remained silent on these issues.

This study will explain the contrast between the two movements and analyze their political relevance to the situation of women in Iran and Egypt in the 1920s and 1930s.

Rokhsareh Shoaee, "The Mojahed Women: The Emergence of the Revolutionary Moslem Women in Iran"

In recent years, Western scholars, Middle East experts and women activists have written about the Iranian women and their struggle against the repressive measures adopted by Ayatollah Khomeini's regime. None of these authors, however, have discussed the role played by the Iranian revolutionary Moslem women, the Mojahed women, who have been involved in fighting against the regime in different fronts including armed struggle. Those writers who happened to touch upon this issue have misunderstood the Mojahed women's ideological beliefs and their personality traits and have failed to discover their motivation in this struggle. Therefore, they have developed misconceptions about the Mojahed women and have erroneously followed the common myths: Mojahed women are blind followers of a religious organization who play no role in the decision-making process and sacrifice their lives to preserve the organization.

This paper will discuss some of the fallacies and myths which still prevail in the literature pertaining to the Mojahed women. It also aims at thought-provoking questions in relation to the processes through which the Mojahed women pass in their struggle for liberation. According to the Mojahedin-e Khalq, which advocates a democratic and progressive understanding of Islam, the liberation of women requires constant social struggle and the transformation of social, economic, political and cultural relations. In the process of training, the Mojahed women go through a course of instruction and study of Quran and other sources. They are, however, exposed to the following questions: What is the nature of inequality between men and women? What are the obstacles on the way to liberation of women? How can revolutionary women eliminate these obstacles?

Relying on the literature published by the Mojahedin and those written by other observers as well as personal observations, attempts will be made at throwing some light on controversial issues concerning this important social group within contemporary Iran.

Erika Friedl, "Women and the Ethics of Work"

Like elsewhere in the Middle East, in Iran, Muslim women work in a great variety of jobs and situations in and outside the home, despite the restrictions of movement purportedly placed on them by their religion. The rationalizations for working in one or the other capacity, in public or private, for or against formal or professional education for girls, are ambiguous on the practical as well as on the ideological level. Arguments are advanced often simultaneously for the view of a woman's obligation being focused entirely on her immediate family in an wholly authoritarian hierarchy of dependency and responsibility, and on resourcefully fighting as her own agent for a good public cause. This ambiguity can be exploited by political interest groups as well as by women themselves to manipulate their own position.

In the proposed paper it will be argued that the roots of the ambivalent attitude between work and women in Iran goes far beyond a fundamentalist-repressive interpretation of religious texts. Crucial to an understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics resulting from these tensions is the clarification of what, on a phenomenological level, "work" means in Iranian culture, how labor is integrated with the understanding of human existence, of status and power, rewards and the quality of life, and the realm of religion, both on the theological and practical level. Based on data gathered over five years of anthropological research in Iran over the past eighteen years, this topic will be explored with special emphasis on its relevance for conditions of life in the Islamic Republic.

Hoda Mahmoudi and Homa Mahmoudi, "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Iranian Women in the United States"

The purpose of this paper is to address the affect of cultural change and the subsequent process of adaptation in the Iranian women residing in the United States. Personal and cultural stresses affecting the lives of Iranian women would be examined through clinical case studies in the following categories: single women, married women, women with children, aging women, and working women.

In addition, socio-economic factors and their affect on acculturation will be examined.

Address Changes

Members are requested to notify SIS (c/o CMES, Harvard University, 1737 Cambridge St., Cambridge, MA 02138, USA) of address changes. The post office will not forward the journal because it is sent 4th-class mail; the post office will not return it unless additional postage is paid by SIS. For example, after the mailing of Vol.17, No.1 (at a cost of \$.63 per copy), SIS had to pay an additional \$.63 in postage for each journal returned because of "addressee unknown." It will again cost \$.63 when SIS is finally notified of the correct address and the journal is remailed. Therefore, one copy will end up costing \$1.89 in postage.

So please notify SIS of any address or name change.

Announcements

Now available in microfiche: DIHKHUDA, 'ALI AKBAR (1879-1956). LUGHAT-NAMAH TEHERAN, 1946-1983.

The Lughat-namah is the most complete and authoritative encyclopedic dictionary of the Persian language. It includes standard Persian vocabulary culled from a wide range of classical and modern texts as well as geographical, biographical, and technical entries. The dictionary represents the combined efforts of many scholars who engaged in selecting and researching entries for more than a half a century. It is particularly useful in establishing pronunciation, explaining idiomatic usages, and providing contexts for thousands of elements in the Persian lexicon. The Lughat-namah is an indispensable tool for research in all fields of Persian studies.

The complete Lughat-namah consists of 26,620 pages on approximately 300 fiche. The price is \$400.00. All orders must be prepaid. Make checks payable to The University of Chicago.

Address orders to: The Middle East Documentation Center, Regenstein Library Room 560, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, IL 60637; Attn: Pam Brummett.